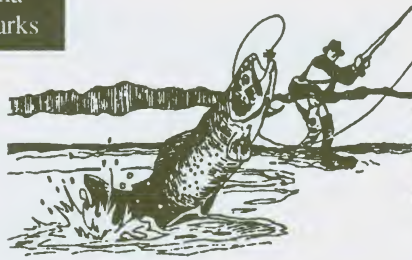


INSIDE TRACKS SUMMER 1993



FISHERIES INSERT

Cooperation Is Key To Stream Habitat Protection

If you plan on building a bridge across a stream, adding rip-rap or making any changes to a stream channel, FWP fisheries biologists would like to talk to you.

The FWP fisheries staff in Region One inspects about 300 proposed streambed alteration projects each year. FWP biologists work as team members with six conservation districts and five agencies to administer the Montana Stream Protection Act, which covers projects by government agencies, and the Montana Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act, which covers projects by private parties.

The purpose of these acts is to protect fish and wildlife resources, minimize erosion and sedimentation and protect water quality. Local review can often point out ways to improve a project. According to Fisheries Manager Jim Vashro, the streambed laws are designed to stop the incremental loss of Montana's streams.

"Over 1,000 miles of stream in Montana have been changed by



A COOPERATIVE EFFORT. Landowner William Bowd (left), Flathead Conservation District Supervisor Mike Kearney and FWP Biologist Laney Hanzel discuss a streambed project on Bowd's land along the lower Flathead River.

streambank work, channelization, culverts and other projects," said Vashro. "The loss occurs in small pieces, but really adds up."

According to Vashro, streambed

protection is the number one fisheries priority in the region. "We spend more than 50 percent of our time on streambed protection," he said.

(continued on Fisheries Insert Page 3)

Access Completed At Trout Lake For Anglers With Disabilities

Anglers with disabilities now have a new option for fishing in the Flathead, thanks to the efforts of the Canyon Sportsmen Association and the FWP Crossing the Barriers Committee.

In early June, volunteer workers completed an access pad along Trout Lake, located 30 miles from Martin City on the east side of Hungry Horse Reservoir Road. The access is designed to be accessible to people using wheel-

chairs and other devices and provides an out-of-the-way experience for disabled anglers who usually are restricted to accesses close to population centers.

Anglers wishing to take advantage of the new access should take the east side reservoir road about 30 miles and watch for the Trout Lake Access sign.

The idea was brought to the (continued on Fisheries Insert Page 4)

IN THIS INSERT

- COOPERATION KEY TO HABITAT PROTECTION
- ACCESS FOR DISABLED ANGLERS AT TROUT LAKE
- KIDS' FISHING DAY
- CATCH & RELEASE TECHNIQUES OUTLINED
- WHITEFISH RECIPES
- ANDERSON AWARD



FREE COPY

PLEASE HELP YOURSELF

Wet Weather Doesn't Dampen Kids' Fishing Day

In spite of an all-day rain and bone-chilling cold, nearly 300 kids turned out June 12 for a kids' fishing day at McGilvray Lake near Bigfork.

Kids fished for rainbow trout planted in the lake by the Creston National Fish Hatchery. The annual

event is organized as part of National Fishing Week by the hatchery and American Legion Posts of Bigfork and Whitefish, with assistance from the U.S. Forest Service and Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

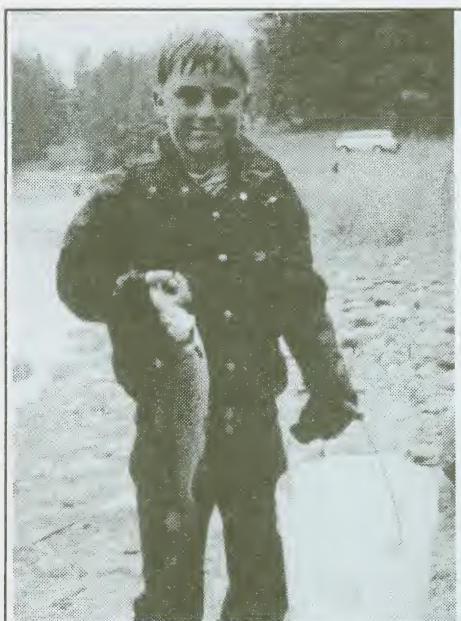
Kids received gift bags of fishing

tackle and information, and had the opportunity to go through an educational activity called "Pathway to Fishing," which involves angler ethics, fish biology and habitat, safety and fishing techniques. A casting contest was available also.

Most kids came to fish, and some were more prepared for the weather than others. One family set up an elaborate tarp and brought hot lunches and lawn chairs. After more than two hours of fishing, they had caught a few small perch and one nice-sized rainbow. "My daughter was excited because she caught a fish. She didn't care how big it was," the father remarked.

Four other fishing days were held for kids 12 and under around the region with cooperative efforts among FWP, USFS and civic groups and other agencies.

WET, COLD, AND COMMITTED. "What rain?" ask these successful young anglers. They were part of the group of nearly 300 kids who turned out for kids' fishing day at McGilvray Lake.



Hold On To That Whitefish

Most anglers know that whitefish are excellent fighters on light tackle. But many anglers turn up their noses at the thought of eating whitefish. That's too bad, because lake whitefish are one of the best table fish in Flathead Lake, and mountain whitefish found in area streams are also tasty. Here are a few recipes featuring the whitefish. Contact FWP for more recipes and tips on catching and preparing whitefish.

Broiled Whitefish Fillets

The skin is usually removed when whitefish are filleted. If left on, place skin side down on a greased broiling rack. Dot with butter and sprinkle with lemon juice, salt, and pepper.

Preheat broiler 10 minutes. Place rack 3 inches from heat and cook 10-12 minutes for 1/2 inch fillet.

Baste frequently while cooking (1/2 c. butter, 3 T. lemon juice). Do not turn fish while broiling. Serve with tartar sauce, lemon butter, or dill sauce.

Smoked Whitefish

Clean the fish, do not scale; remove the heads. Cure 8-10 hours in a brine of 1 1/2 c. non-iodized salt per gallon of water; add brown sugar as desired. Dry, then place in a smoker. Precook at 180°F for 30 minutes. Reduce to 100°F and smoke 10-12 hours with alder or apple wood chips.

Baked Whitefish Creole

Remove the skin and cut the fish into serving pieces. Fish fillets may also be used. Place in a baking dish and add the Creole Sauce.

Creole Sauce

- 1/4 c. chopped onion
- 1/4 c. chopped celery
- 1/4 c. chopped green pepper
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 2 T. butter/margarine
- 1 t. salt, pepper to taste
- 2 c. canned tomatoes
- 1 bay leaf

Cook the onion, celery, green pepper and garlic in the melted butter until tender, but not brown. Mix with the remaining ingredients and pour over the fish.

Bake uncovered at 350° F for 45 minutes.



SCRAPPY AND TASTY. Mountain whitefish and lake whitefish are abundant in Flathead waters. Although maligned by many anglers, they are excellent fighters and table fish.

Tips On Proper Catch-and-Release Techniques

Out of respect for Montana fishes, many anglers practice catch-and-release. Catch-and-release fishing can provide more than just the satisfaction experienced from letting a fish go and watching it swim away. It can benefit the future health of the resource. Anglers who plan to release westslope cutthroat, or any fish, should:

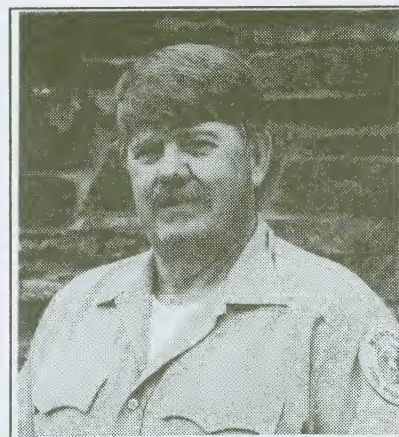
- o Avoid the use of bait. Artificial lures and flies result in lower mortality;
- o Use barbless hooks that make hook removal fast and easy;
- o Play the fish as rapidly as possible—don't play it to total exhaustion;
- o Keep the fish in the water while handling and removing the hook;
- o Remove the hook gently—don't squeeze the fish or put fingers in its gills;
- o If deeply hooked, cut the line close to the mouth. Don't yank at the hook;
- o Release the fish only after it regains its balance. If necessary, gently hold the fish upright facing the current, and slowly move it forward and backward;
- o Release the fish in quiet water close to the area where it was caught.

Anglers practicing catch and release for deep-water fish like lake trout in Flathead Lake should keep several things in mind in addition to standard techniques.

- o Bring the fish up slowly the last 30 feet to allow it to "burp;"
- o Try to keep the fish in the water at all times while removing the hook;
- o If you take pictures, hold the fish horizontally with both hands;
- o If the fish can't dive on its own, vigorously plunge it headfirst into the water;
- o If the fish still can't dive, pull it down using a clothespin or S-hook on a 50 foot cord with a weight.

Call FWP for more details.

Anderson Honored By Loon Society



Fisheries Fieldworker Gary Anderson was presented with the "Partners Award" by the Montana Loon Society at their annual meeting on June 2 in Kalispell.

Loon Society President Lynn Kelly, in presenting the award to Anderson, said, "For several years you have helped the Montana Loon Society put out floating signs needed to protect nesting loons on Upper Stillwater, Lower Stillwater, Tally and Island lakes.

We know you are very busy this time of year, yet you still fit in this work with a smile and sense of humor. We simply can't thank you enough for all you have done on our behalf."

The award is presented annually to people employed by various agencies which work cooperatively with the Loon Society in loon management efforts. 🦉

Cooperation Key To Habitat Protection (continued)

(continued from Fisheries Insert Page 1)

FWP Biologist Laney Hanzel works on projects along the Flathead River and notes that the large, fluctuating river poses special problems. "On smaller streams we can usually predict the impact of a project and how to correct it," he said. "But the Flathead is different. It's influenced by discharges from Hungry Horse Dam and by Flathead Lake levels. And because of the power and size of the river, techniques are expensive and difficult."

Hanzel cites the example of Lybeck Dike upstream of Kalispell where extensive efforts have been required to control the river flow. Because of the special conditions on the river, a 12-agency team addresses streambed protection along its length.

"The program works through cooperation," said Hanzel. "By working together with the conservation district, the landowner and other involved agencies, we maintain a consistent approach to streambed protection. We

can usually find a solution by working together."

According to Vashro, streambed protection work slows the degradation of Montana's streams, but more needs to be done. "When stream habitat is damaged, it can take decades to recover," he said. "Only in the last few years have we begun to develop programs to repair the damage. Eventually, we may be able to reverse the tide." 🦉

Access Completed At Trout Lake (continued)

(continued from Fisheries Insert Page 1)
Region 1 FWP Crossing the Barriers Committee by members of the Canyon Sportsmen last year. Committee members agreed that such a project would fill a need for a quality angling experience for anglers with disabilities.

According to Cliff Nelson, president of Canyon Sportsmen, the access was a grassroots effort. "We saw a need to help and felt this was a perfect spot for disabled access and fisheries improvements," he said. "This is an example of what can be done if everyone pitches in for a good cause."

Columbia Falls artist Joan Hula completed a painting to raise money

for the effort. As it turned out, most of the materials and all of the labor for the Trout Lake project were donated, so remaining dollars raised by the painting raffle will be used on projects at Lion Lake and Smith Lake.

Canyon Sportsmen Association donated equipment operation, dozens of hours of volunteer labor and cement. Workers included: Cliff, Junior, Nancy, Jay, Randy, Annalisha and Andrew Nelson; Ken Chomo, Mike Clanton, Jim Sharsu, Tom Heider and Kim Lyman.

Several other members of the Crossing the Barriers Committee also helped, and the U.S. Forest Service contributed planning expertise.

Signs were provided by FWP and Signs Now, and posts were contributed by Larry Wilson.

Montanans for Multiple Use, Canyon Sportsmen Association, Flathead Wildlife and other members of the Crossing the Barriers Committee assisted with the raffle.

As part of the project, and part of the Hungry Horse Mitigation effort, westslope cutthroat trout were stocked in Trout Lake to bolster the existing fishery and increase the proportion of native westslope cutthroat genes. A small tributary to the lake will be improved for spawning next year.



A GRASSROOTS PROJECT. Cliff Nelson, president of the Canyon Sportsmen, works on the Trout Lake access pad. Many hours of volunteer labor have helped provide better access for sportspersons with disabilities.



AND THE WINNER IS... Dan Rose of Hungry Horse (right) who was the winner of the painting donated by artist Joan Hula. The raffle raised about \$600 to improve access at local lakes for anglers with disabilities.

INSIDE TRACKS is published by Region One

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Fish, Wildlife & Parks**



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